

(Taken from An Official History of Whitfield County Georgia 1852-1999 by the Whitfield-Murray Historical Society, 1999)

The first Dalton policemen were hired by the City Fathers, usually two at a time or as needed. There was no city jail as such because the county jail was used by both departments and still is today.

In the early days, there were marshals, but by 1900 the city fathers appointed two policemen and spent \$885.00 on the department.

With the advent of automobiles in the early 1900s, the City Council passed a speed limit of 15 miles an hour for Hamilton Street and had a policeman to watch for speeders. Cars had to be parked parallel to the curb and not more than three feet away. Horses and wagons still had the right-of-way on the muddy streets. There was also a night patrolman who made rounds of the businesses.

In 1912, the Chief of Police had to run for office in the city elections. Mr. A. E. White was elected for several years in this period. By 1916, the budget had grown to \$2938.97.

The jail on S. Hamilton Street was built in 1929 but it wasn't until 1936 that a police car was purchased. Until that time, they had used taxicabs to transport prisoners. They traded \$470 and two mules for a brand new Ford V-8 patrol car. Uniforms cost \$29.95 each.

In 1948, the police force was fully staffed with 22 men and two patrol cars. Uniforms were heavy wool complete with jackets, brass badges, and shoes similar to dress shoes today. Pay was \$105 for officers, \$140 for the Chief.

In 1951, the city decided to elect Police Chiefs again after having been appointed by the Council for some time. In 1953, women began to work in the offices for radio and clerical work. Another worked as ticket person for over-parked cars.

In 1967, after much controversy, the mayor and council authorized the purchase of four air-conditioned patrol cars at a total cost of \$7,199.16. It was not until the 1970s that women were used as patrol officers.

An official community relations program was instituted in 1972. The purpose was to update the entire communication system and add a new emergency vehicle to be equipped with a public address (PA) system.

In 1997, the department moved into the new Police Services Center. All divisions are now located there including the Patrol Division, Criminal Investigations Division and Support Services Division.

History

The department was the first city department to be designated as a Drug Free Workplace.

Marshals

1893 J.C. Fincher
1896 R.D. Ralston
1899 W.M. Hannah
1900 J.C. Fincher

1903 A.E. White
1905 J.C. Fincher
1924 J.T. Bryant
1928 T.N. Peebles
1930 W.A. Britton
1935 W.A. Britton

Police Chiefs

1938-1943 Burgan Butler
1943-1946 W.H. Southers
1946-1950 Jack Hayes
1950-1952 George Weaver
1952-1954 Jack Hayes
1954-1973 L.L. Vining
1973-1980 Robert Lankford
1980-1987 James Lowe
1987-1994 Gene Slade
1994-2007 James Chadwick
2007- Jason Parker

